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9TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

COMMITTEE ON
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November 15, 2017

Received & Inspected

NOV 21 2017

FCC Mailroom

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

Thank you for your commitment to making investments in our nation's infrastructure and broadband connectivity. I am writing to express support for the Universal Service Program for Schools and Libraries, commonly known as E-Rate.

In the 21st Century, high-speed internet is an essential service for homes, businesses, and schools alike. Unfortunately, many rural Americans still lack sufficient broadband infrastructure to take advantage of the benefits connectivity provides. Funding for programs such as E-Rate helps to bridge the digital divide that separates rural communities like those in Southwest Virginia from the rest of the country.

In line with the long-established Universal Service Fund model, the E-Rate program provides annual funds to public libraries and K-12 public and private schools to assist in providing access to broadband connectivity and robust internal WI-FI. Reliable internet access provides advantages to students including distance learning, online assessments, and web-based homework, among others.

It is my understanding that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) may be considering cuts to E-Rate Category Two funding. I am concerned that cuts to this funding would reverse positive steps taken to ensure that students have the necessary tools to succeed. E-Rate is critical to providing students the advantages new information technologies provide. With the foregoing in mind, I ask that you continue your support for E-Rate and the connectivity services it supplies.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that students have the skills and experiences necessary to be successful in the future.

Sincerely,

H. Morgan Griffith
Member of Congress



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

April 3, 2018

The Honorable Morgan Griffith
U.S. House of Representatives
2202 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Griffith:

Thank you for your letter in response to the Wireline Competition Bureau's Public Notice regarding the E-Rate program's category two budgets. Your views are important and will be considered as the Bureau prepares its report for the Commission.

In 2014, the Commission adopted five-year budgets for schools and libraries purchasing category two services, including the services and equipment needed for Wi-Fi in classrooms. This rule replaced the old "two in five" rule, which made planning for category two services and equipment difficult for many schools and libraries. But this rule change was temporary—it went into effect in funding year 2015 and will sunset in funding year 2020. To help the Commission decide whether to renew this approach, the Commission directed the Bureau to monitor and provide a report on category two applicant budgets using data gathered in funding years 2015 through 2018. The Bureau's report to the Commission is due before the filing window for funding year 2019 opens next year.

In preparation for its report, the Bureau released the Public Notice referenced in your letter. The Public Notice sought comment from applicants, service providers, and other interested parties about how applicants have used their category two budgets, and the percentage of category two services purchased by applicants that were or will be covered by the budgets. The Bureau also sought data and feedback on how the budgets impact different types of E-Rate applicants, such as those in rural or remote geographies or those with unique student populations. Finally, the Bureau sought general comment on the administration of the budgets.

The comment cycle for the Public Notice has closed and Bureau staff is carefully reviewing the submissions. The Bureau will take into consideration the issues and concerns presented by all stakeholders.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ajit" being particularly prominent.

Ajit V. Pai